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Anyone who tries to become acquainted with the present-day Guaraní Indians in their own villages will not fail to notice at once that certain domains of their culture appear completely open to foreign influences, whereas in others the attachment to the traditional patterns is extraordinarily strong. The conjunction of the factors responsible for this form of reaction to interethnic contacts is very complex and can be understood only with reference to the central theoretical problem of acculturation, concerning the reinterpretation of the new elements in terms of the tribal "ethos," or, in other words, the reconciliation of the conflict, on the basis of previous experience between the traditional solutions and values, on the one hand, and the innovations that become necessary or desirable, on the other.

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In their numerical composition, as we have seen, the present-day Guaraní villages vary between some 40 and a few hundred individuals. Because of the extraordinary spatial mobility, the size of the nuclei is subject to constant modification. The

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smaller groups are those that are found close to the coast in contact with urban and rural populations, while the larger villages are located farther in the interior, at different places in the extensive basin of the Paraná. The large villages, with two hundred

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or more souls, are normally subdivided, however, into various local groups, each of which is made up of a kin group that has as nucleus the great family of a personality of prestige, generally a religious chief (Nanderú among the Nandéva and Mbila; paí among the Kayová). The whole village or horde actually appears as a unit only in certain circumstances, such as important religious celebrations.

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Concerning the degree of social cohesion of the different communities, its diminution is, so to speak, in direct proportion to the time during which the group lives in constant relation with foreign populations. Among the most striking causes are, in the

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first place, the large number of interethnic marriages, and, in the second place, unfavorable conditions for performing religious ceremonies, which constitute perhaps, as we shall see, one of the forces that most cement the group solidarity of the Guaraní.